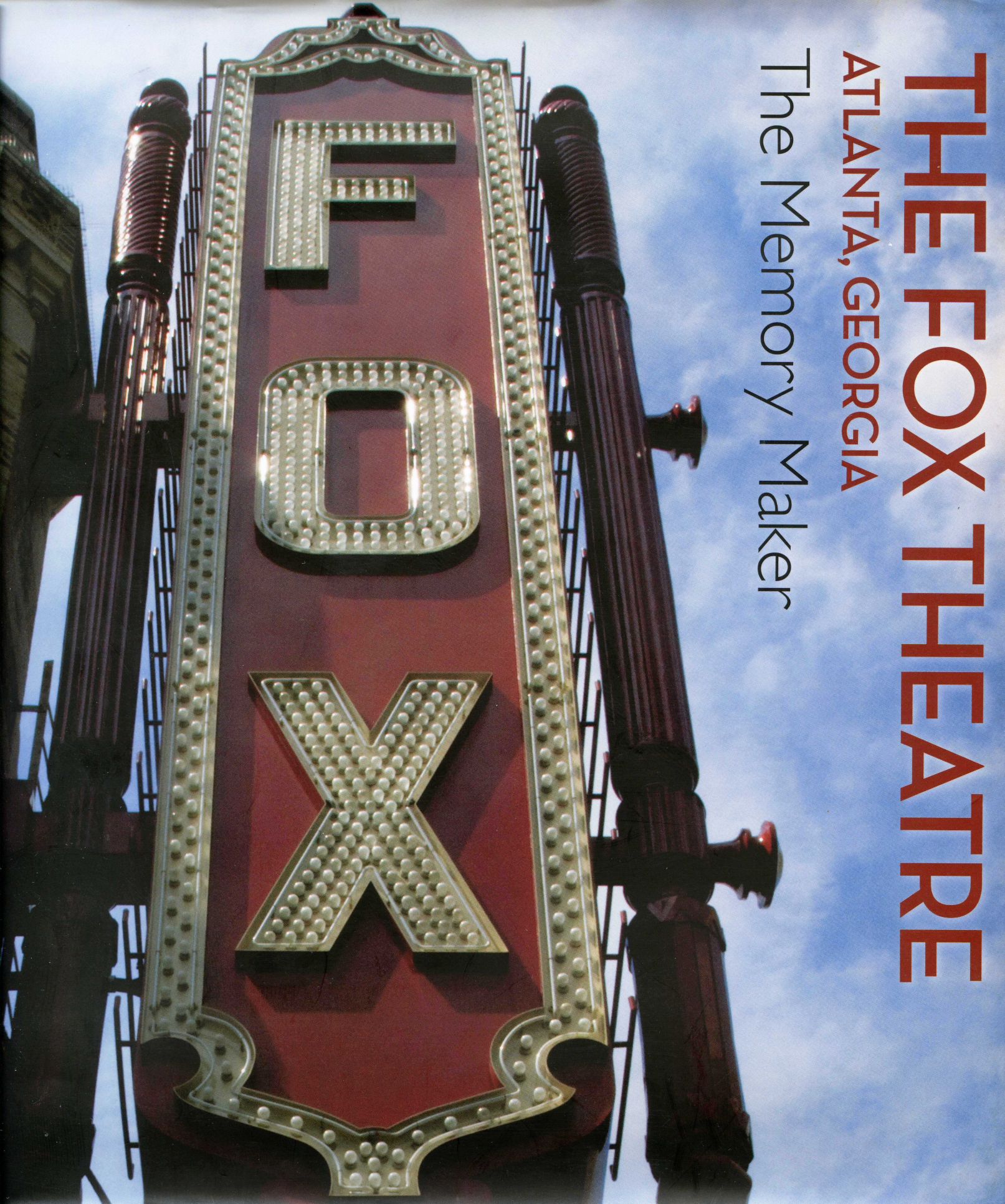


THE FOX THEATRE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

The Memory Maker



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MIGHTY MO & JOE

Affectionately known as “Mighty Mo,” the Fox’s exquisite Mighty Möller organ cost \$42,000 to make in 1929. In 1974, it was valued at \$400,000; today it is priceless. The organ was built by M.P. Möller Pipe Organ Company. When the Fox opened, it was the largest pipe organ in the world.

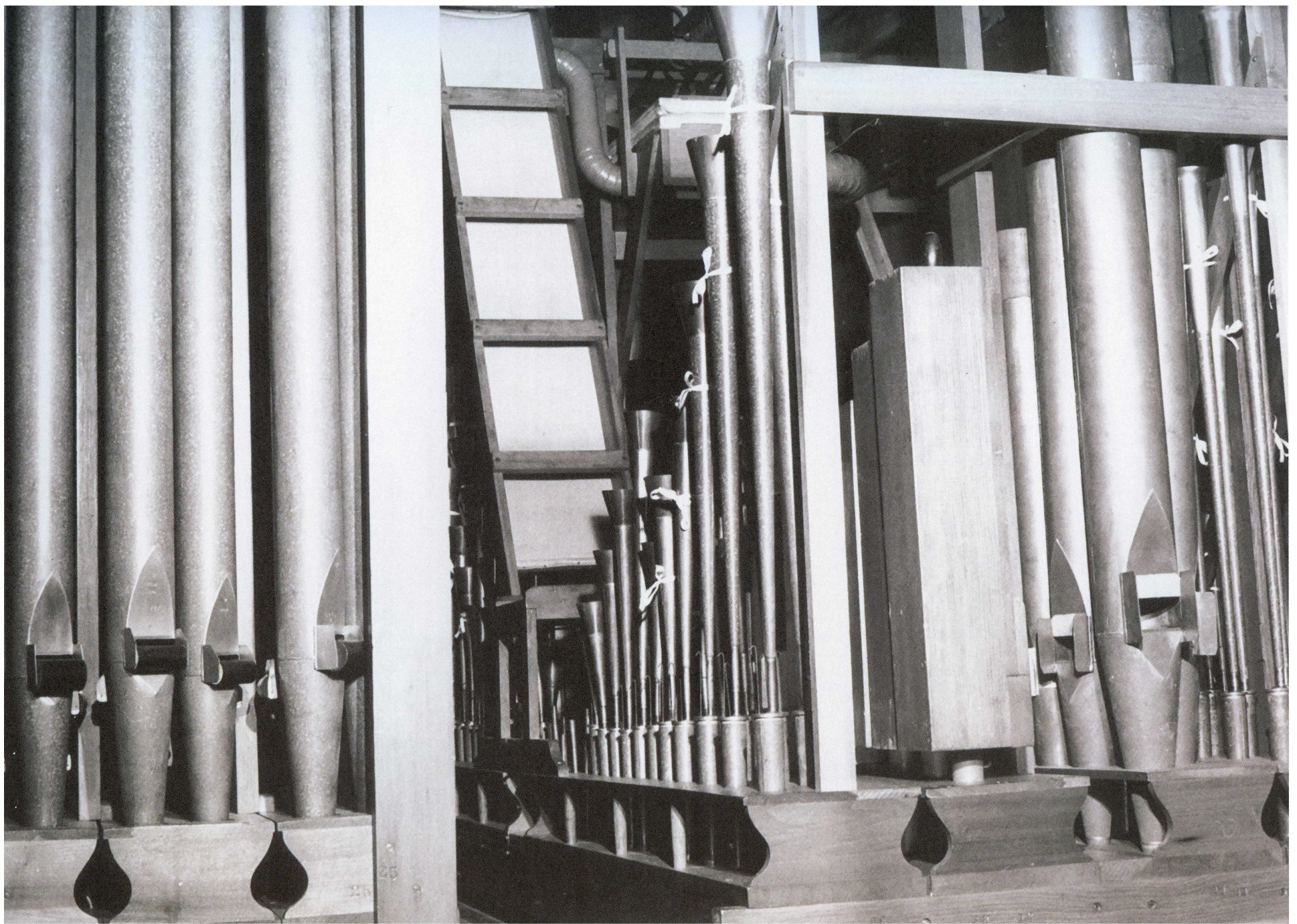
Mighty Mo was designed to accompany silent films, which is why it can also make sound effects like sirens, car horns, and train whistles. However, by the time the Fox opened Hollywood was only producing talking pictures. It was nearly 50 years before the organ accompanied its first silent film.

Instead, the Mighty Mo organ was used to lead sing-alongs, accompanied by follow-the-bouncing-ball slides from a Brenograph glass slide projector, which is still in use. But by the 1950s, the organ was relegated to the basement. By 1954, it had fallen mute.

Luckily, Joe Patten remembered Mighty Mo and was determined to save it. As a child, Patten’s fascination with pipe organs led him to a career fixing them in and around Lakeland, Florida. While in the Navy, he visited the Fox Theatre and fell in love with it. Eventually, he relocated to Atlanta to be near friends and, at the Fox, discovered what was to become his life’s work.



Mighty Mo is powered by a 75-horsepower motor which connects the stops to real instruments, such as cymbals, sleigh bells, and snare drums. To switch instruments, the organist pulls a stop and then "plays" the instrument with the keyboard. Over the years, several artists recorded on Mighty Mo, including Bob Van Camp, Dennis James, Larry-Douglas Embury, Steven Ball, Hector Olivera, Lee Erwin, Lyn Larsen, Virgil Fox, Simon Gledhill, Richard Hills, Walt Strony, Clark Wilson, John Seng, Linda Kent, Billy Nalle, Philadelphia Organ Quartet, Tom Hazleton, and Jonas Nordwall. | **Michael Portman**



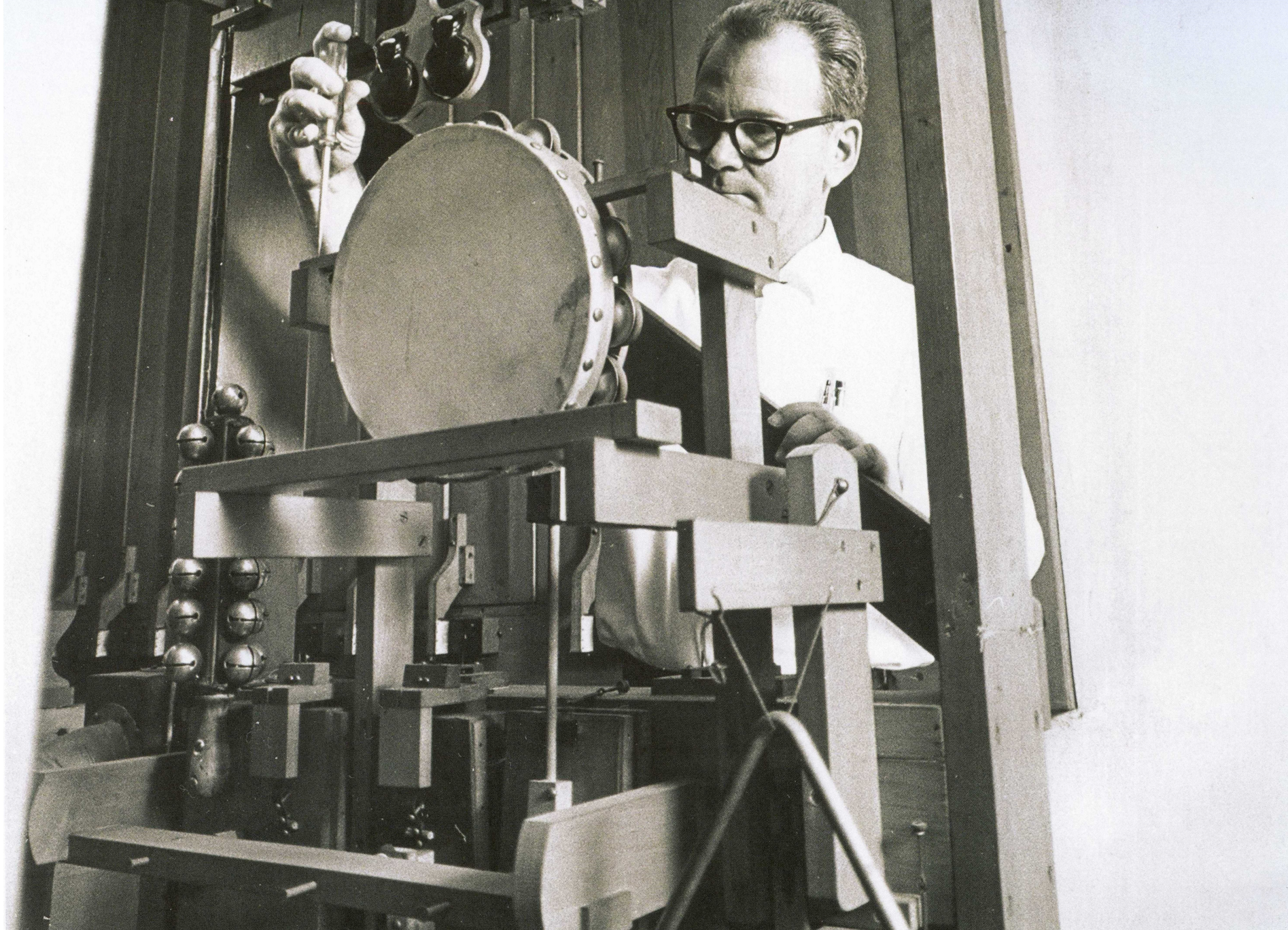
The organ has 3,622 pipes — the smallest is the size of a ballpoint pen and the largest is 32 feet tall and big enough for a person to stand in. The pipes are arranged in five chambers hidden behind the elaborate “opera boxes” on either side of the stage. | **Michael Portman**



There have been several organists in residence at the Fox Theatre. In chronological order they are Iris Wilkins (who played opening day), Jimmy Beers, Al Evans, Eddie Ford, Cliff Cameron, Homer Knowles, Don Mathis, Dale Stone, Stanley Malotte, Bob Van Camp, Robert Irvin, Walt Winn, Jay Mitchell, Ken Double, and Larry-Douglas Embury (pictured). | **Sara Foltz**



In 1963, the Fox's retired Technical Director Joe Patten (standing) and organist Bob Van Camp (seated) approached Mosque, Inc. with a deal they couldn't refuse. If Mosque, Inc. would buy the parts, they would donate the labor needed to restore the organ. Hundreds of hours and nearly seven miles of new wire later, Patten succeeded in getting the organ to run again, but his work was just beginning.



It took Patten more than 30 years to get the organ back to its original condition. He even added instruments that had been forgotten, like a grand piano and a locomotive whistle. | **Fox Theatre Archives**



In 1978, Atlanta Landmarks, Inc. asked Patten to move into the Fox so he could keep an eye on the building and provide 24-hour security. This emergency exit masks the entrance to his apartment.

| **Kristi Casey Sanders**



Patten reconfigured the Shriners' former office space into a three-story apartment, which Atlanta Landmarks, Inc. owns. A secret passageway connects his bedroom to the auditorium. From his second-floor living room, visitors can climb into the Fox's iconic onion dome. In the kitchen (pictured) is an antique bank vault. | **Fox Theatre Archives**